

# MACEDONIAN STUDIES

Quarterly Journal devoted to Macedonian History, Byzantine Studies  
culture and historic tradition of the Slavs in Southern Europe

## CONTENTS

Concerning the Manuscript Entitled Escorialensis $\Omega$ III 2 (535) and its Scribes .....	2
<i>Antonio Bravo Garcia</i>	
Problems of Medieval Historical Approach .....	7
(Based on the Materials of Byzantine Historiography)	
<i>M. V. Bibikov</i>	
<i>An Icon Representing the Virgin of the Pinacothek in Forli</i> .....	18
<i>Silvia Pasi</i>	
Three Notes on the Miniatures in the Chronicle of Manasses .....	25
<i>Tania Velmans</i>	
Various References to the Restoration of the Holy Cross .....	55
<i>Andreas N. Stratos</i>	
The Architectural Landscape of Vladimir Suzdal .....	61
<i>Hubert Faensen</i>	
Journey to Evritania in Central Greece .....	89
<i>John T.A. Koumoulides</i>	
Athos—The Holy Mountain .....	99
<i>Stig Y. Rudberg</i>	
Book Review .....	107
<i>Nicholas Catanoy</i>	

*Price this issue U.S. \$ 15/- or its equivalent amount in your currency*

*Annual subscriptions U.S. \$ 50/-*

*(The annual subscription includes all the special issues, suppliments etc.)*

*Bulk subscription by special arrangements*

*For distributors in other countries see list inside*

*No part of this journal may be reproduced by any means, nor translated nor transmitted into a machine without the written permission of the publisher, except can be used for the purpose of research work.*

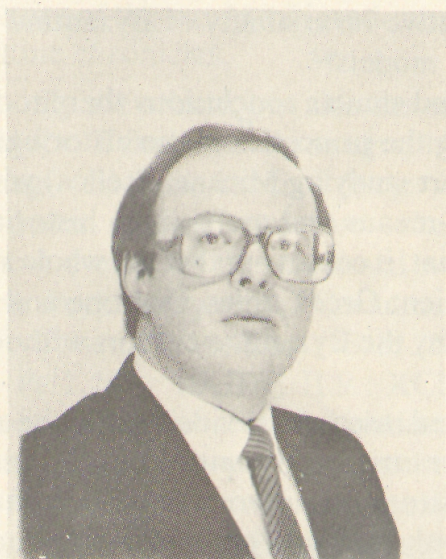
Printed in India by:—

DHRUVCO. New Delhi-110015



## **Problems of Medieval Historical Approach (Based on Materials of Byzantine Historiography)**

*M. V. Bibikov*



*Prof. Dr. Michael V. Bibikov born 1951 in Moscow. Graduated from Moscow University. Author of more than 70 scientific papers, published in USSR, Austria, Bulgaria, Yugoslavia, GDR, Romania, Poland, Czechoslovakia etc.*

*Main topics, byzantine literature and history cultural contacts between the peoples of the medieval Europe and Asia. He is also the secretary for science in the institute of the History of USSR at the Soviet Academy of Science in Moscow.*

The problem of the ancient continuity of Byzantine culture is not a new one. On the contrary, from the very beginning science got interested in Byzantium, for the most part, as time of decline of antiquity (in fact what was studied was the "Later" Empire; the very name spoke of legalized pejorative nuance). Byzantine philology came into being not as an independent science but as a component of classical philology. Byzantine chronography, respectively, was studied by the Hellenists only as a kind of "christianized" continuation of the ancient historiography traditions.<sup>1</sup> This view did not change in principle even to the end of the last century : Karl Krumbacher whose book until not so long ago was the only fundamental code of knowledge for Byzantine written records based his estimates on Byzantine literature mainly on the ancient cultural-historical values. The closeness to the ancient forms determined for him the importance of the works of the Byzantines. Byzantine philosophy seemed united by the repetition of Plato and Aristotle, Byzantine rhetoric—formalized in school obedience and turned delicate by the Second sophistry though having reached perfection of style; Byzantine natural scientific literature was characterized by imitation and fantastic interpretation, oblivion of the ancient heights of musical culture was typical of Byzantines' musical theory. Ancient traditions, according to K. Krumbacher, dominated Byzantine historiography too while the importance of the chronicles was exhausted by what came to us as poor compilations of destroyed ancient originals.<sup>2</sup>



In conformity with this the basic criteria too did not lie in the Byzantine reality but in the ancient past and as the basic literary merit of the medieval Greeks was considered the philological comment on the ancient people, so the Byzantine culture and literature represented as if a schoolchildren's comment on the masterpieces of antiquity, related neither to its time, nor to the movement forward.

The problem is no less important in modern Byzantine studies : it is not axiomatic and as a proof for ancient "content" of Byzantine civilization, statistical excerpts and scrupulous analysis on the squares of the component elements of Byzantine culture, as well as results of texts' comparisons are used, all facts are examined in logical strictness, without XIX century's axiologism. Thus the West German Byzantinist Günter Weiss, dividing Byzantine society into component units, for analysis, defines the qualitative invariability of Byzantine social structure, the preservation in it of the principle ancient models.<sup>3</sup>

If one refers to Byzantine historiography one can find similar conclusions there too. The Swedish research-woman, Anitra Gadolin<sup>4</sup>, comparing the principles of the historiographic works in Byzantium from XI century (for the most part studying Michael Psellos) with the ancient one gets the conclusions of actual identity of means and methods in historians of classical Byzantium and ancient antiquity. More than that, it comes out that the whole system of social values did not undergo any changes since ancient Greek times, that one and a half thousand year old criteria had been taken as a pattern by the Byzantine authors without any essential transformations.

But while the anti-historical approach of the mentioned research is evident (thus the author actually excludes from the field of her attention V-X centuries of Byzantine history, estimating that period as "dark ages" leaving no trace in history of culture. Thus the refusal of studying *the evolution* of the historical process is not only declared but what comes out as a research task is . . . a mechanical comparison of isolated facts), Klaus Wessel seemingly gives a picture of development.<sup>5</sup> Byzantine culture in this wonderfully illustrated and published compendium is not just a monolithic block, not a disorderly catalogue of records : the author gives both classification and chronological stages of the one thousand year old road of civilization. But, as the reviewers correctly pointed out, periodization in this case serves the object to prove the principle inner invariability of the phenomena of Byzantine culture in all marked periods.

The records of medieval literature are also estimated by their similarity to the ancient prototypes and models. It is not by chance that A. Toynbee pointed out in a book recently published that the basic popular association in connection with Byzantine culture is the conception of conservatism.<sup>6</sup>

Such a view should not be considered just as absurd misunderstanding. If we refer to Byzantine historical texts we shall see that Byzantine history in the opinion of the Byzantines themselves, is but a history of the Romans. Polibius, Diodoros of Sicily or Plutarch have called the Romans in their works 'Ρωμαῖοι. Theophanes and Michael Psellos, John Scylitza and Nicetas Choniates, George Pachymeres and John Cantacuzenus, confirming the idea of political continuity with the ancient Rome call by the same name both themselves and their contemporaries. Laonicus Chalcocondyles calls the Byzantine Emperor and the orthodox patriarch "Bazileus of the Hellenes" and "Hellenic archiereus", as if the story is about the Hellenic ancient times. For Bryennios or Zonaras Adrianople remains as old Orestias (Bry 217.25; Zon 625. 5-7), Theodore Scutariotes recalls the old name of the Vardar river—Axios (Scut 421), for Psellos the legendary Babylon personifies his con-



XI.2). The archaisation of the used ethnonymy and toponymy is an element of the system of using words by the Byzantine chronographers. In the texts of the XII-XIII centuries the Turks-Seljuks are still called "Persians", the Hungarians are called "Paeonians", "gepids", "Huns", "Mysians", "Scythians", "Pannonians" etc., the inhabitants of the Adriatic coast—"Triballians", "Dalmatians", "Illyrians", "Dacians", while the population along the Danube river—getae", "Dacians", "Scythians" etc.<sup>7</sup> Byzantine chronologists of the XII Century, characterizing the ethnic and geographical aspects of the Black sea coast, write about "gelonians", "Agathyrse", "Arimaspeans" and "Issedones". As if submitting to a definite tradition, these places are still populated by "Dacians", "Gelonians", "Colchians", "Syndians", "Coraxes", "Melanchlenians", "Vastarns".<sup>8</sup> It seems like the ethnogeographical picture of the world in Herodotus, Posidonius or Strabo comes back to life on the pages of Byzantine chronicles.

Not only the ethnic, but also the social-political terminology of ancient times, comes back to life for Byzantine chronographers. Gerousia, archon, trier, obol, dareicas, stater, parasang—all these are real things for Thucydides or Xenophon; Augustai, Caesars, patricians, duces, magistri, praetors—the heroes of Appianus and Dio Cassius "take part" in the historical events of the medieval world on the pages of Theophylactus Simocatta, Constantine Porphyrogenitus, Cecaumen, Psellos or Cinnamus (Sim 257.14, comp. Theoph. 271.17; Const. 56.29; Cec 198.1; 288.28; 174.24; 276.15; 280.6; 174.II, 13; 280.12; 282.9; 266.6; Ps 1.147 : LXII.7; II.9 : XCIII.6; Cinn 31.10; 277.33). These terms, in particular, indicate now medieval feudal institutions—the Supreme Senate of the aristocracy, grades of the hierarchic scale—patricians, caesars, dukes, Empresses, provincial governors, Byzantine coins—follis and nomisma and lineal measures—miles.

Byzantine authors themselves proclaimed and cultivated the principle of imitation to the classical past—"mimesis". The well known words of Theodore Metochites "Everything has been said and nothing remains for us"

Πάντα ὡς εἶπεῖν φθάσαντ' ἄλλοις εἴληπται καὶ οὐδὲν ὅτι  
λείπεται μεθῦστερον νῦν ἡμῖν μοιρίδιον εἰς χρῆσιν τῇ φωνῇ

(Met 14) seem to support the routine assertion that compared to ancient times, the new Byzantine chronography lacks whatever new technique, new critical method and what is most important, it lacks principally new perception of the world.<sup>9</sup>

Another extreme in the estimate of medieval perception of the world is the denial of any originality and actuality to the medieval chronography, interpreting medieval chronography only as applications of scholastic methods to history.<sup>10</sup> Decadence is often connected with the idea of Byzantine culture; christianization was presented as a source of formalization of thought and dehumanization of culture.

"The Cambridge Medieval History" (the chapter about Byzantine literature was prepared by Franz Dölger) characterizes the world of the Byzantines authors as something artificial, more of an exercise in formal and technical skill than as a result of spontaneous inspiration or of a significant experience.<sup>11</sup> Still more rigorous is R. Jenkins's sentence : the Hellenic rhetoric became a kind of a scrouge for Byzantine speech—it made vapid the content of the latter and as a result the Byzantine repented and became obscure using a language that was far from reality. There was no poetry in Byzantium—there was only rhetorical (in the bad sense) versification—pretentious and tasteless. Any originality, any freshness, any feeling



was suffocated. Byzantine records—according to R. Jenkins—were not connected with life at all, they did not serve as a means of expressing thoughts; they remained formal, scholastic schoolchildren's exercises.<sup>12</sup>

Originality is denied also to the "works of 'literature'" (characteristic is the coined term of "literature" in brackets!) in the last code description of Byzantine civilization by André Guillou; best "works" are said to be only those created by a purely religious imagination.<sup>13</sup> The denial of vitality in the Byzantine works, the idea of their abstractness, not connected naturally with the historical reality of the time they were written makes one see in Byzantine literature only a distorting mirror of reality which does not help perceive and understand Byzantine culture but creates only artificial hindrances, "ciphering" the meaning. Such is the estimate of Cyril Mango.<sup>14</sup>

It really seemed that Byzantine church chronicles, beginning with Eusebius, marked a decisive breaking off from the ancient world outlook. Historical time and historical hero began to be treated in a new way. The principle of breaking away from the ancient cultural heritage is declared in "Conquest of Crete" by Theodosios Diaconos (ThDiac 1.255–259; comp. LDiac 97.10–12). Time becomes teleological: according to Caminiates eternal life is the crown of virtue (Cam 3.12–13). Time becomes eschatological too. The expectation of the world's end, the fear of it make Theophanes, Cecaumen, Georgius Acropolites or Ducas see manifestations of God's anger in the raids of the "Barbarians", in the earthquakes, in the epidemics and in the poor crops. With such a conception time moves forward to a definite point in future, symbol of the catastrophic purging of the world. Very indicative is Psellos's statement that "everything has rushed to destruction and the destiny of the Romaic state got worse beyond description" (Ps 1.119 : V.10–12). That limit becomes a fetish while the historical process out of man's "arena of choice"<sup>15</sup> such as it was in the classical Hellas, turns into a kind of projection guided by supreme transcendent powers. The certainty of the ancient author-historian in the significance of his work is replaced by the principle of work on the edge of anonymity. The motto of John Damascene of "nothing my own" (PG 94, col.525) is embodied also in the declaration of the annalist Theophanes—to write "adding nothing from yourself" (Theoph 48–15).

Thus in the difference of the estimates about the attitude of the Byzantine culture towards the ancient heritage, what both stated views of the research-workers have in common is the denial of originality to the medieval Greeks, its connection with life. To the principle of historical approach enabling one to see in every cultural-historical phenomenon its intransient significance, its dependence on the preceding course of society's development on the one hand and on the other—the self-sufficing significance of the novelty achieved by a certain period of time—to that principle they oppose the conception of culture, examined as if out of time and space, as "a closed world where no living reality penetrated" (Paul Lemerle's words about Byzantine encyclopaedism<sup>16</sup>).

Let us now examine, guided by Byzantine chronography of X-XV centuries, the applicability of the above-said views on Byzantine literature in connection with such fields of historical outlook, as organization of historical space and time and description of the historical hero.

Behind the outward identity of the elements of the space perceptions of Byzantine historiography with ancient ideas there exist principle differences in the whole system of ideas. Classical antiquity's historiographers were guided as a whole by the polis's criteria: the polis was a reading point in space. Herodotus giving this or that location of events, as if he invites his fellow-citizens for a journey. The crisis of the slave-owning polis did



not destroy but strengthened the thirst for revival of the polis's ideology : Roman antiquity was re-actualized by Titus Livius, the polis's universal acceptance together with the whole developing ethics of the individual family is restored by Plutarch. Even Polibius's universalism comes, in the long run, to the starting position of the citizen of the megalopolis Rome. For Diodoros this already is a common place<sup>17</sup>—a matter of course. The sculpturally tangible space orientations of the polis are full of the attributes of mythological and semimythological elements in which the communal relations of antiquity never died, no matter how far the personality emancipation went at the end of ancient times.

Byzantine chronography not only inherited space extent of diaspora from Hellenism in exchange for the polis's concreteness of ancient Greek classical literature<sup>18</sup>, but cultivated christian oecumenism as well. The appealing to the oecumene, antithesis of the Christian world to the world of the uninitiated did not turn out just a replacement of the ancient opposition "Hellenes—Barbarians". Definiteness, stability of the polis's idea was replaced in Byzantine chronography of non-concreteness by abstract localization of postulating oecumene. Such is the dichotomous principle ("Romaic-Non-romaic") of world description in Constantine Porphyrogenitus. This space—no matter whether in Scylitzes, Anna Comnene or Nicetas Choniates—having lost the polis's links, did not create similar accurate and adequate structure. It is different and contradictory in its structure. One and the same phenomenon gets several link relations in that space. Thus several levels of attitudes can be defined, for example, of the old Russian state among Byzantine historians from XII-XIII centuries.

The first level is the traditional opposition of "Romaic" and "Barbarians". Here Russia is a successor of the "Scythian" past (Cinn 232. 4–5; NChon 129.28; 347.39–40). On the ground of such an oppositionis Euripides's idea of cruelty of the tauroscythians murdering the foreigners (the idea was initiated by Nicephorus Basilaces and Michael Choniates—NBas 214,291; MChon II.215.10), their infamy and theomachy (NChon 312.2–4). At the same time Russia happens to be most important element of christian world. Nicete Choniates calls the Russian people fighting against the Cumans the "most christian" (NChon 522.28); Russia and the peoples linked with it are stronghold of orthodoxy. The opposition of "Barbarians-Nonbarbarians" gets at this level a religious character : "Barbarians-Christians". Finally, the third level of defying Russia's place in the structure of the contemporary society, according to Byzantine chronicles, is said to be the direct comparison between Russia and Byzantium, the similarity of the processes of the social development of the two states, as noticed by Byzantine historians<sup>19</sup> (NChon 532.14–20).

Thus the space division proves to be not only of a different system, but even contradictory while the ideology of oecumenism gets more symbolic than really tangible form. The characteristic medieval symbolism of space organization among Byzantine historians becomes apparent also in the psychological nuance of the place of action they describe. Mountains, forests are symbol of danger for Leo Diaconus and Cecaumen (LDiac 62.13–63.4; Cec 210.11–14); at the same time for Psellos they are symbol of solitude, seclusion, of a life of an anachorite (Ps II.67 : CXCVI.5–7) while for John Caminiates they are connected with the idea of monastery shelter (Cam 7.43–46). For Nicetas Choniates the sea is identical to storm, squall, calamity, destruction (NChon 122.58–123.59; 171.59–60; 315.73–76; 316.91; 326.51–66 etc.) while for Psellos or Nicephoros Gregoras it is more often symbol of calm harbour, quiet, steadiness, stability (Ps 1.151 : LXXII.1–4; II.58 : CLXXVIII.1–5; Greg 1.97.1–6; 459.12–13; II.576.10–13; 978.23–979.6 etc.)<sup>20</sup>



Space in Byzantine chronography is individualized in perception. Symbolism and non-concreteness of the oecumenical view is characterized by a great attention for "its" individual point in the universe. It is that focus in space that becomes personally coloured place attracting the interests of Byzantine historians. Thus Malalas pays a special attention of Antioch. John Caminiates concentrates on Thessalonike, Psellos is interested in the Emperor's court in Constantinople, Nicetas Choniates does not fail in mentioning his native Chonus, for Cinnamai the Danube regions where he had been with the military campaigns are more concrete and near than the centre of the Empire. But nevertheless the basic centre of space orientation, of the political interests is the capital at the Bosphorus. Ducas calls it the centre of the world, a second paradise (Duc 385.11–14). And this hypertrophied exclusiveness itself turns into a symbol—symbol of the Emperor's power, of universal centre of culture.

Space has also an "ethical" nuance. The world is represented as a world of struggle, contradictions and finally, as a world that is, as a whole, an antithesis to the "heavenly harmony". The very conception of space is dualistic, it is an arena of struggle between good and evil, ascetism and sin, the heavenly and the earthly, the spiritual and the materialistic.

Thus the historical space of Byzantine historiography, though seemingly identical to the entho-geographical nomenclature represents a different system from the classical antiquity's one. The sculpturally tangible polis that is the lowest point in space estimates and attributions<sup>21</sup> is replaced by an universalism getting to symbolism—the reverse side of particularism. The personal differentiated attitude to space reflects the new character of the social relations of the society on its way to feudalism.

Byzantine historiography makes no less striking progress in the sphere of historical time's idea. Mythological time of the ancient world with its idea of circular motion, constant reversion and cyclic recurrence of development corresponded to the polis's outlook. the deepening differentiation of the idea of eternity, separation of the personality from the tribal community caused restauration reaction of classicism. Thus Plutarch subjects Hellenism to criticism from the point of view of classicism.<sup>22</sup> The vitality of polis's ideas can be found even at the decline of the ancient era in the notion of the historical process's stability in Marcus Aurelius (MAur X.27).

Iterance of time that could be noticed in Theodosius Diaconos, for example, (ThDiac II.2–27, 82–III; III.51–55; IV.33–34 etc.) is not identical to the cyclic recurrence of the ancient concept of time. In Byzantine historiography time is individualized : the reign of Alexis I is devided by Anna Commene from the temporal stream; Nicephore Bryennios subjectively forms the temporal structure of events; Gregoras antideterminism and providentialism is as much individualized as is Nicetas Choniates "tragical irony" of the coupling of events. Historical time in Christianity is also make dramatic as is historical space. For Eustathius it is a "particoloured succession of misfortunes devouring everyone" (Eust 4.29–30).

Particularization of time concept is closely connected with the symbolics of the temporal organization in Byzantine historiography. The change of day by night, the astronomic phenomena, are interpreted as prophetic omens. Patriarch Nicephorus tells about a starfall preceding the iconoclastic disturbances (Nic 73.8sl.); Theophanes's successor interpreted the lunar eclipse as an omen of the death of King Leo VI (PrTheoph 376.8 sl; comp.LGr 284.5),



Scylitzes read the appearance of a comet as a sign of the coming death of John Tsimises (Scyl 311.84–88); the end of Empress Irene's life, the wife of John III Vataes, was predicted by Theodores Scutariotes reading the solar eclipse (Scut 485.19–25); fortune-tellings and horoscopes attracted the attention of Nicephore Gregoras (Greg 305.13–306–2). Time, measured not by equal quantitative intervals but by interchange of the elemental "omens", "signs", "symbols", "presages" as well as prophetics fills up the movement of historical process in Malalas, genesius, Scylitzes, Constantine Manasseus etc.<sup>23</sup>; the symbolic signs in the narrative of Michael Attaliates—earth-quakes, fires, comets, solar eclipses—are numerous (att 90.9–91.16; 144.11–17; 145.3–17; 241.14 sl.; 287.38 etc.). The chronicle of Michael Glycas is also full of symbolic interpretation of phenomena and objects (Gl 33.9 sl.; 48.22 sl.; 214.5 sl; 487.19–21; 515.8 sl. 560.11 sl.).

Historical time in Byzantine historiography is expressed in anthropomorphic categories. Its content are man's actions and not the abstract course of chronological intervals. The annalistic principle in Theophanes's narrative remained unique for Byzantium. Psellos, Anna Comnene, Cantacuzenus or Pachymeres measured time by the length of man's life of the historical hero.

The world of the historical heroes in Byzantine chronography seems very close to the Hellenic ancient times in many respects.<sup>24</sup> Antiquization of Byzantine contemporaneity is expressed in comparisons : Leo Diaconus compares Emperor Nicephorus to Heracle, John Tsimises—to Theseus (LDiac 48.14–18; 59.11–12) Anna Comnene compares her hero to Heracle (Anne 19.6). Similar comparisons are found also in Psellos, Cinnamus, Nicetas Choniates and many others; Nicephorus Bryennios looks for his historical example in the history of Brasis, Alexander the Great, Timopheus, Pericles (Bry 143.18–145.1; 165.19; 199.5 sl). The description of events and heroes in Byzantine chronicles often coincides in form with the ancient historical short-stories. The story of Priscus of Panium about the raid of the Huns on Nyssa coincides with Thucydides's description of the siege of Plataea (Thuc II.75 sl), while the story described by the Sasanidian Peroses reminds of the news of Herodotus about the Egyptian Amasis and the Persian King Cambyes (Herod III.1). Nevertheless, as the sources' analysis proved, the coincidence of the stories in form with the subject of the ancient historians did not affect the truth of the narrative.<sup>25</sup> Thus antiquated form, concealing the new content, bears the stamp of the genre etiquette.

The concept about the historical hero in the medieval chronography became truism as stereotyped, consisting of a collection of cliché is defined also by symbolism in the description of human personality in the historical stream. The moralistic manifestation of the "ethos" of the hero in ancient chronography was connected with the description of physical beauty, with the revealing of external display of the heroic character. The Byzantine is more interested in the discovery, in the "revelation" of the exceptional in the everyday things that are common and socially insignificant. Thus Theophilos turns down the beauty of Cassia in the chronicle of Symeon Magister (Mag 624, 17–625.4). Even the good soldier, according to Nicephore Bryennios, is distinguished not by his tall figure and physical strength, not by his severe and strong voice but by the nobleness of the soul and the determination to bear the difficulties. Instead of physical beauty Byzantine historians describe physical illnesses. Man is a reflection of Idea, a bearer of Symbol. The ugly beggar whose holiness influences the course of events in nature and in history, argues, in Byzantine chronicles, with the figure of the Mighty Emperor.

Symbolism and non-plasticity of the Byzantine historical heroes, contrary to the ancient tastes, is shown in the formation of the portrait. The characteristics of the personality consists



not so much of the emotional image as the description of the features. (LDiac 96.16 sl). The colour of the hair, the brilliance of the lips, the shades of the eyes, the "noble" bearing, the combination of "normative" colours in the garments and in the whole appearance (golden, purple, white, sometimes azure) distinguish the ethical and the aesthetical ideal for Anna Comnene.<sup>26</sup> The enumerated features of the historical hero are not neutral but bear a definite moral, symbolic nuance. But the portrait's normativity, the standardness of the heroes of Michael Psellos does not exclude their spiritual complexity.<sup>27</sup> The individualization of the author's method in Byzantine historiography consists in transference of the accent on the very spiritual part of man, often turning out to be in contradiction with the outward manifestations of the hero.

The hero in Byzantine historiography is opposed, as the observations of the research workers show, to the anti-hero: this antithesis personifies the struggle between good and evil, between light and darkness. Unlike Robert Guiscard, Bohemund and Tancred, Anna Comnene describes in her works the heroic personality of Alexis I, John Caminiates oppose the nobleness of the citizens of Syracuse to the image of the emir, the portrait of John Tsimisces for Leo Diaconus is the very antithesis to Nicephore, the apologist Manuel I is outlined by Cinnamius describing negatively his enemies. Psellos and Nicetes Choniates transfer the dichotomy in the description of the hero to the inner, ethical sphere of man (such are, for example Constantine IX Monomachos or Andronicus Comnenus).

The formation of the medieval method for hero's description, different from the ancient one, was directly influenced by the feudalization of Byzantine society. Attaliates, Bryennios, Anna, Scylitzes, significantly affirm the figure of the hero—the family aristocrat. The noble origin, the belonging to a certain clan become the most important elements in the formation of hero's image by Byzantine historians.

Thus, similar to the fact that historical space for Byzantine historians seems, in outward appearance, identical to the ancient one, actually differs deeply from it, as historical time is postulated by the linear reflection of the transcendental supreme powers, turning out to be individually organized and coloured by the particularization of the concepts, so the historical hero—no matter how symbolic and stereotyped—proves to be a lively active figure connected with his society and time. The basic categories of Byzantine historical approach growing from the Hellenistic norms turn into notions new in content. They correspond already to another level of social-cultural development of the medieval society with its specific economic necessities, political structure and ideology, that is compared to the ancient period of historiography. And in the centre of attention of Byzantine historians there stands not an absolute irrational idea far from the people in the world, but a fighting and doubting man, subject to oppression and triumph.

*Translated by Prof. Dr. Peter St. Koledarov*

## **Abbreviations of the Sources**

Anne	—	Anne Comnène. <i>Alexiade</i> (Regne de l'empereur Alexis Comnène. 1081–1118). Texte èt. et trad. B. Leib, t. 1–3. Paris, 1937–1945.
Att	—	Michaelis Attaliothae <i>Historia</i> . Rec. I. Bekker. Bonnae, 1853.
Bry	—	Nicéphore Bryennios. <i>Histoire</i> . Introd., texte, trad. et notes par P. Gautier. Bruxelles, 1975.
Herod	—	Herodoti <i>Historiae</i> . Rec. C. Hude, v. 1–2, Oxonii, 1933.



- Gl — Michaelis Glycae Annales. Rec. I. Bekker. Bonnae, 1836.
- Greg — Nicephori Gregorae Byzantina historia... cura L. Schopeni. Bonnae, 1829.
- Duc — Ducas. Historia Turcobyzantina. Ed. V. Grecu. Bucuresti, 1958.
- Eust — Eustazio di Tessalonica. La espugnazione di Tessalonica, ed. S. Kyriakides. Palermo, 1961.
- Zon — Ioannis Zonarae Epitome historiarum libri XIII-XVIII, ed. Th. Büttner-Wobst. Bonnae, 1897.
- Cam — Ioannis Caminiatae De expugnatione Thessalonicae. Rec. G. Böhlig. Berlin, New York, 1973.
- Kek — Советы и рассказы Кекамена, изд. и перев. Г.Г.Литаврина. Москва, 1973.
- Cinn — Ioannis Cinnami epitome rerum... Rec. A. Meineke. Bonnae, 1836.
- Const — Constantine Porphyrogenitus. De administrando imperio, ed. by Gy. Moravcsik, transl. by R. Jenkins, v.I. Washington, 1967.
- LGr — Leonis Grammatici Chronographia. Rec. I. Bekker. Bonnae, 1842.
- LDiac — Leonis Diaconi Caloénsis historiae libri decem... e rec. C. B. Hasii. Bonnae, 1828.
- Mag — Theophanes Continuatus, Ioannes Cameniata, Symeon Magister, Georgius Monachus. Rec. I. Bekker. Bonnae, 1838.
- MAur — Marcus Aurelius, ed. W. Theiler. Lipsiae, 1951.
- MChon — Lampros Sp. Μιχαὴλ Ἀκομινάτου Χωνιάτου τὰ σωζόμενα. Athenai, 1879.
- Met — Theodori Metochiatae miscellanea philosophica et historica, ed. Chr. G. Müller—Th. Kiessling. Lipsiae, 1821.
- MBas — Garzya A. Una declamazione giudiziaria di Niceforo Basilace.—EEBS, 1968, t. 36.
- NChon — Nicetae Choniatae Historia. Rec. J.—L. van Dieten, p. I. Berolini, Novi Eboraci, 1975.
- Nic — Nicephori patriarchae Constantinopolitani Breviarium... Rec. I. Bekkerus. Bonnae, 1837.
- PrTheoth — Mag
- Ps — Michael Psellos. Chronographie ou histoire d'un siècle de Byzance (976–1077). Texte ét. et trad. par E. Renauld, t. I–II. Paris, 1926–1928.
- Sim — Theophylacti Simocattae Historiae. Ed. C. de Boor, corr. v. P. Wirth. Stuttgart, 1972.
- Scyl — Ioannis Scylitzae Synopsis historiarum. Rec. H. Thurn. Berlin, New York, 1973.
- Scut — Sathas K. N. Bibliotheca graeca medii aevi. v. VII. Venetia, Paris, 1894.
- ThDiac — Panagiotakis N. M. Θεοδόσιος ὁ Διάκονος καὶ τὸ ποίημα αὐτοῦ " Ἀλωσις τῆς Κρήτης". Herakleion, 1960.
- Theoph — Theophanis Chronographia, Rec. C. de Boor. v.I, Lipsiae, 1883.
- Thuc — Thucydides Historia. Ed. O. Luschat. Lipsiae, 1954.



## Abbreviations

EEBS	—	Επετηρίς Ἑταιρείας τῶν Βυζαντινῶν Σπουδῶν
JÖBG	—	Jahrbuch der Österreichischen byzantinischen Gesellschaft
PG	—	Migne J.P. Patrologiae cursus completus. Series graeca.

## NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> Beck H.-G. Die byzantinische Studien in Deutschland vor Karl Krumbacher. — XAJI IKEC, München, 1958, Курбатов Г.Л. История Византии /Историография/. Ленинград 1975, с.18,32,40 ; Beck H.-G. Byzantinistik heute. Berlin, New York, 1977, S.9.
- <sup>2</sup> Krumbacher K. Geschichte der byzantinischen Literatur. München, 1897, S.319.
- <sup>3</sup> Weiss G. Antike und Byzanz. Die Kontinuität der Gesellschafts—struktur. -Historische Zeitschrift, Bd. 224, 1977, S. 529–560.
- <sup>4</sup> Gadolin A. A Theory of History and Society with Special Reference to the Chronographia of Michael Psellos (XI Century Byzantium). Stockholm, Göteborg, Uppsala, 1970.
- <sup>5</sup> Wessel K. Die Kultur von Byzanz ("Handbuch der Kulturgeschichte"). Frankfurt a.M., 1970.
- <sup>6</sup> Toynbee A. Constantine Porphyrogenitus and his World. London, New York, Toronto, 1973, p. 524.
- <sup>7</sup> See corresponding ethnonyms in : Moravcsik Gy. Byzantinoturcica, bd. II. Berlin, 1958.
- <sup>8</sup> Бибииков М.В. Пути имманентного анализа византийских источников по средневековой истории СССР /XII – первой половины XIII вв./.- "Методика изучения древнейших источников по истории народов СССР". Москва 1978, с.101.
- <sup>9</sup> Krumbacher K. Op. cit., S. 227
- <sup>10</sup> Dempf. A. Sacrum Imperium. Geschichts—und Staatsphilosophie des Mittelalters und der politischen Renaissance. München, Berlin, 1929, S. 251.
- <sup>11</sup> Dölger F. Byzantinische Literatur. In: The Cambridge Medieval History, v.IV, p.2 Cambridge, 1967, p. 210.
- <sup>12</sup> Jenkins R. Byzantium. The Imperial Centuries: A. D. 610–1071. New York, 1966, p. 385.
- <sup>13</sup> Guillou A. La civilisation Byzantine. Paris, 1974, p. 334, 347
- <sup>14</sup> Mango C. Byzantine Literature as a Distorting Mirror. Oxford, 1975.
- <sup>15</sup> Аверинцев С.С. Поэтика ранневизантийской литературы. Москва, 1977, с.35.
- <sup>16</sup> Lemerle P. Le premier humanism byzantin. Notes et remarques sur enseignement et culture à Byzance des origines au X siècle. Paris. 1971, p.300.
- <sup>17</sup> Аверинцев С.С. Плутарх и античная биография /К вопросу о месте классика жанра в истории жанра/. Москва, 1973, с.190 и сл.
- <sup>18</sup> Cf. Beck H.-G. Das Literarische Schaffen der Byzantiner. Wege zu seinem Verständnis. Wien, 1974, S.8.
- <sup>19</sup> Бибииков М.В. Древняя Русь и Византия в свете новых и малоизвестных византийских источников.- "Восточная Европа в древности и средневековье". Москва, 1978, с.296–297.
- <sup>20</sup> "Из истории культуры Средних веков и Возрождения". Москва, 1976, с.3 и сл.



- 21 Лосев А.Ф. Античная философия истории. Москва, 1977, с.49 и сл.
- 22 Аверинцев С.С. Плутарх... , с.190.
- 23 Mal. 411.11 с.; gen 8.4-9; 10.19-11.23; 21.22-22.18; Scyl. III.59; 175.59-63; 194.77-79; 311.84-88 Man 4581-4606  
Hunger H. Die hochsprachliche profane Literatur der Byzantiner, Bd. I. München, 1978, S. 270
- 24 Ср. Welskopf L.E. Menschenbild in der Antike. "Проблемы античной истории и культуры". Ереван, 1979. 1979, Т. II, с. 7-13.
- 25 Benedicty R. Die historisches Authentizität eines Berichtes des Priscos. Zur Frage der historischen Novellisierung in der frühbyzantinischen Geschichtsliteratur. — JÖBG, 1964, Bd. 13, S. 1-8.
- 26 Ἡ περιγραφὴ τῆς τῆν Ἀλεξιάδα. Πῶς ἡ Ἄννα Κομνηνὴ βλέπει καὶ ζωγράφει πρόσωπα καὶ χαρακτῆρες. — "Ἑλληνικά", τ. 5, 1932, σ. 255-276.
- 27 Любарский Я.Н. Михаил Пселл. Личность и творчество /К истории византийского предгуманизма/. Москва, 1978, с.230 и сл.

## EDDA

Scandinavian Journal of Literary Research

Most of the articles are handling Norwegian Swedish and Danish literature and are printed in Scandinavian languages. But there are also articles in English and in German Bimonthly.

U.S. \$ 19.00 a year

Address:

EDDA, Postbox 1090, N-9001 Tromsø, Norway



## Three notes on the miniatures in the Chronicle of Manasses

Tania Velmans



*Tania Velmans, doctorat ès lettres, Bulgarian-born and French by adoption, 1972 Laureate of the Institut de France, is an internationally known scholar and lecturer on medieval Byzantine art. She has published some fifty articles on mural paintings, mosaics, ikons, and miniatures, and three books, notably La peinture murale byzantine à la fin du moyen âge.*

*Madame Velmans has been associated with the National Center for Scientific Research and in 1973 was named Director of Research. In 1978 she became one of the editors of Cahiers Archéologiques. She is currently engaged in research on medieval art at the eastern fringes of Byzantine influence, particularly in Georgia (USSR).*

The illustrated Bulgarian translation of the Greek Chronicle of Constantine Manasses, written during the reign of Manuel I Comnenus (1143–1180), has until now raised a passionate interest among historians, philologists and historians of Byzantine art. The text of this chronicle is a kind of summary of universal history, from the creation of the world to the reign of Emperor Alexius Comnenus (1081–1118). The Greek original is lost, but a copy of it remains. As for the Bulgarian translation, it seems to have enjoyed considerable success in its day, since Serbian and Russian versions of it are extant. The Serbian and Russian translators did not make the effort to go back to the Greek original and contented themselves with retranslating the Bulgarian text.

Since the publication in its entirety of the Bulgarian version of Manasses' Chronicle (cod. Vat. slavo II) by Iv. Dujčev,<sup>1</sup> the miniatures of this codex, commissioned by the Bulgarian czar John Alexander (1331–1371), have been completely interpreted, dated and situated in their historical context. More recently, some brief but pertinent remarks on the iconography of the portraits of this chronicle have been made by H. Belting,<sup>2</sup> V. Djurić<sup>3</sup> and I. Spatharakis.<sup>4</sup> The exceptional interest of the Manasses manuscript miniatures, which number among the very rare secular pictures preserved in the area of Byzantine influence, impels us in our turn to make certain observations about them. Our observations bear upon : (1) the portraits of the Bulgarian czar John Alexander and his family, (2) the cycle devoted to Bulgarian history, and (3) the remaining miniatures.



цѣмъ хнѣмъ црѣ прѣхъ прѣ слабѣ



васнаіе црѣ

а прѣхъ панскѣ



*Chronicle of Manasses* Vat. slavo II : John Alexander flanked by Constantine Manasses and Christ.



1. *The portraits of John Alexander and his family.*

The first miniature of this manuscript (fig. 1) is not without originality. On a full page is seen Czar John Alexander in a dalmatic and golden ankle boots, holding the sceptre and wearing the *kamilavkion* with pendants. A little flying angel who emerges from a section of the sky is crowning him a second time. The czar, pictured full face, constitutes the center of a larger composition. At his right appears Christ, seen three-quarter face, writing on an unrolled scroll. On it is legible the beginning of the Gospel according to John: "I am the light of the world..." (John : 8, 12). To the left of the sovereign the person portrayed is Constantine Manasses, the author of the chronicle, also seen three-quarter face. He is writing on an unrolled parchment. That inscription, very poorly preserved, speaks of the contents of the chronicle.<sup>5</sup> Constantine Manasses is shown barefoot, as is Christ. The three personages are nimbed. Several aspects of this miniature are worth pointing out.

That a manuscript should have a frontispiece showing the sovereign surrounded by figurative elements which associate the ideas of power and of divine will with his image is not in the least surprising in Byzantium. At first glance, one might think that the artist simply copied the miniature which stood at the beginning of the original chronicle; in that case, he might be supposed to have substituted the picture of the Bulgarian czar for the one probably (no certainty is possible) representing Manuel I Comnenus. On looking more closely at the picture, such a supposition seems unconvincing. If the artist was inspired by a Byzantine miniature frontispiece, he must have altered it very appreciably and, when all is said and done, have restructured it entirely. The placement and the attitude of the Christ figure are consistent with such an assertion. Indeed, Christ occupies neither any point whatever on the central axis of the pictorial field, as in other miniatures with three persons, nor a side position toward which the other characters would be oriented, as is routinely seen on votive images in churches and in manuscripts.<sup>6</sup> In addition, his attitude is unusual.

Of the three persons represented, only the czar is full face and in the central axis of the picture. He stands on a royal purple pedestal (whereas Christ's is blue). His posture is traditional and corresponds to the formula generally used to show the sovereign in all his majesty. A flying angel is preparing to place a golden crown on his *kamilavkion*. The symbolism in the gesture of the angel crowning the sovereign is well known. By this gesture, an angel, or the Virgin, or Christ confers supreme power on the recipient and invests him as autocrat. Whoever the personage holding the crown may be, he always acts in the name of Christ, the initiator of this investiture. These pictures appear in the time of Basil I and seem contemporaneous to the first coronation ceremonies celebrated by means of a religious service. In the course of these ceremonies, the action of crowning is carried out by the patriarch.<sup>7</sup> In the famous chronicle of Skilitzes, it is those services which were chosen to be pictured for the various coronation scenes<sup>8</sup> of the sovereigns and not the symbolic investiture. Moreover, there is nothing surprising about this fact. In the Skilitzes manuscript it is a matter neither of frontispieces nor of representative portraits of sovereigns, but of miniatures in the text and therefore of coronation illustrations which signify nothing but the beginning of a reign. They are pictures of events limited by their political and institutional framework and not projected on a transcendent background. In symbolic investiture, such as appears in Manasses' Chronicle, what is involved is not the recital of an event, but the putting into evidence of the legality of a reign which is being linked to a manifestation of divine will. That aspect, at once mystical and juridical, of the idea of investiture appears equally in the verbal



formula "crowned by Christ," by which, according to Anna Comnena, the crowd acclaimed the imperial couple on their coronation day.<sup>9</sup>

The large inscriptions which appear above Christ and the czar confirm, if there were any need, the meaning of the picture. Indeed, above Christ one reads: "Jesus Christ, czar of czars and eternal czar." The inscription relating to the sovereign says: "John Alexander, in Christ-God faithful czar and autocrat of all the Bulgarians and the Greeks."<sup>10</sup> The transfer of power from Christ upon the czar is further underlined by the hierarchical gradation of the respective titles of Christ and of the sovereign.

The portrayal of the author of the Chronicle also poses a problem. Contrary to what is seen in a Greek copy of his Chronicle preserved at Vienna (Vind. Phil. gr. 149, fol. 10 r), where, conforming to tradition, he appears without nimbus, in clothing of the period and presenting his book to the *Sebastocratorissa* Irene (fig. 2), in the Bulgarian version Constantine Manasses is shown with a nimbus, in ancient vestments and barefoot, like the apostles and the evangelists. He is writing on a long parchment and is executing a highly complicated movement, his legs turned to one side and trunk and head to the other. Among the known portraits of authors in Byzantium, none resembles that of the Bulgarian chronicle. Most often, these portraits show the authors in the posture of evangelists seated and writing, as is the case with Nicetas Choniates in his Chronicle (Vienna, B.A. Hist. gr. 53, fol. 1 v)<sup>11</sup> or with Hippocrates, in the manuscript Paris, Gr. 2144, fol. 10 v.<sup>12</sup> More rarely, the formula of the author standing and addressing the sovereign is chosen, as Michael Psellos does in the Mount Athos manuscript Pantocrator 234 (fol. 254 r).<sup>13</sup> A variant of that formulaic position—the author full length addressing the sovereign with a gesture of prayer, is applied to the figure of Pachymeres, in his History (Munich, State Lib, gr., 442, fol. 6 v).<sup>14</sup> None of these portraits, nor any others now known, shows the author with a nimbus. Of course, that detail exists on the leaf in the Louvre (A-53, fol. I)<sup>15</sup> which represents Pseudo Dyonysios the Areopagite as an author, but in that case a saint is involved. The author portrait of the Bulgarian Manasses manuscript recalls none of these miniatures; it is probably inspired by pictures of the evangelist, but not by the most common ones where they appear seated. His clothing and the parchment on which Manasses is writing remind one of a miniature like that of the Apostolos in the Vatican Library (gr. 1208, fol. 3 v), already cited by H. Belting,<sup>16</sup> in which the evangelist Luke is pictured in an attitude analogous to that of Manasses, slightly turned toward the apostle James, seen full face (fig. 3).

All this may seem original but not very curious. The same is not true for the figure of Christ, which seems traced from Manasses' but turned in the opposite direction, as if it were reflected in a mirror.<sup>17</sup> This strange detail, unimaginable in Byzantium, imparts an absurd aspect to the composition as a whole. Other portrayals of Christ writing do not exist in Byzantium and, besides, would have no purpose. Moreover it is completely contrary to the rules of Byzantine iconography to show Christ as an accompanying figure or as an acolyte, even if care has been taken to draw him slightly larger than the other two figures.

Another feature of this miniature could seem surprising, whereas it conforms to the customs of the period. Christ and Manasses are executing a rapid movement which gives them a sort of spontaneity and situates them in the present. Modeled with care, their bodies really have substance. The plastic expression here tends toward a certain realism of the hellenistic type. On the contrary, the style used to represent the czar is more oriented toward the abstract which would logically be suited to divinity: immobile, impassive, with a flat de-materialized body, it suggests eternity.



Este liber appellatur flos cum Cronica

іоаннѣ александрѣ въ хабѣ рѣцѣ исаакодрѣ жѣ  
въ бѣлгаріи нѣмѣ

ісусъ црѣць  
и црѣць вѣчнѣ

Iesus Christus

аггѣ  
рѣ

аѣтописецъ  
манаси  
с. iohannes



Es. Iohannes alexander macedo  
ad cuius petitione iste liber  
fuit translatus de greco in slauico

Collection of Saint John Chrysostom's Homilies (Paris, B.N., Coislin 79): Emperor Nicephorus Botaniates between Saint John Chrysostom and the archangel Michael.



Elsewhere we have already called attention to the fact that in virtually all churches and manuscripts of the Palaeologan an epoch the most archaic and most unchanging figures from the point of view of style are those of the sovereign and the members of his family. Thus in Lesnovo, Christ is found with the features of a sturdy local peasant, whereas Czar Dušan and his family resemble the Byzantine imperial portraits of the ninth to the twelfth centuries.<sup>18</sup> The rapid evolution of style in the 13th and 14th centuries toward a relative realism does not affect the portraiture of the sovereign, which represents a hardened, archaic, and absolutely stable element. This is doubtless to be explained by the fact that the style of religious pictures was evolving—paralleling piety—toward a more and more sentimental expression open to narration. The imperial mystique, however, had not budged an inch during this whole period and consequently neither had the portrayals of emperors and kings. In a pictorial universe which was cautiously approaching the real, the sovereign's figure remained, on the whole, abstract and more symbolic, even if its iconography became richer. Our miniature obeys this general rule and is thus to be associated with other works where the contrast between the two conceptions—that of the new Byzantine humanism and that of tradition—is set out in analogous opposition.

Considering the factors set forth above, it seems reasonable to think that for his frontispiece, the artist did not copy the one in the original chronicle. Besides, nothing indicates that the first page of the latter was embellished by a portrait of the reigning Byzantine emperor, Michael I Comnenus, since its donor was the *Sebastocratorissa* Irene.<sup>19</sup> The miniaturist of the Bulgarian version probably combined various models. For the symbolic investiture, he could have been inspired by a miniature of the type found in the famous Psalter of Basil II (Bibl. Marcienne gr. Z 17, fol. 3 r)<sup>20</sup> which shows the emperor crowned by Christ and by an angel, while another angel presents the sceptre to him; or else by a model like the miniature in the famous Barberini Psalter at the Vatican Library, gr. 372 (fol. 5 r).<sup>21</sup> Representation of the symbolic investiture of the sovereign seems to have been much appreciated by czars and ambitious kings bordering Byzantium. Thus, this iconographic variant is particularly frequent in the churches of the Serbian and Bulgarian kingdoms. John Alexander himself is so pictured, with one angel crowning him and another presenting him with the sceptre, in the Backovo ossuary church which he had had restored (fig. 4).

The total composition of the miniature of the Manasses manuscript could have been suggested to the artist by other full page Byzantine miniatures, placed at the beginning of a manuscript, in which the emperor was supported by the author of the text and a sacred personage other than Christ. Thus, folio 2 verso in the collection of Saint John Chrysostom's Homilies (Paris, B. N. Coislin 79), illustrated about 1078, shows Nicephorus Botaniates between St. John Chrysostom and the archangel Michael (fig. 5). The saint is offering his book to the emperor, while the archangel acts as witness. At the emperor's feet, a tiny prostrate figure could be that of the artist. However, whatever the model may be, the attitude and the gesture of the Christ in our picture are quite probably an invention of the painter. Plainly, the artist was not thoroughly cognizant of the rules of Byzantine iconography. Doubtless then, he was not Greek and had worked far from Constantinople, in the Bulgarian capital. If that were so, one would have to deduce that a certain provincialism reigned in the workshops of the Bulgarian capital, a provincialism especially manifest in a relative ignorance of the traditional one might say, protocol rules of the empire.

In the full page miniature representing the funeral service celebrated for Czar John Alexander's son (fig. 6), it is a matter not only of an adaptation, but also of a blending of two





Chronicle of Manasses (Vat. slavo. II): Funeral service for Prince John Asen.



narratives or of two different orders. The one, purely secular, tells us about the death of a young prince mourned by his entourage; the other recounts the posthumous destiny of his soul. The whole is in large part copied from the composition of the Dormition of the Virgin, as that seems to have been the custom in the period. Nevertheless, it is pre-eminently a historical scene that is involved. It brings together a considerable number of persons contemporary to the painter.

The dead prince John Asen, in robes of state and wearing the royal crown, is laid out on his death bed in the center of the composition. The funeral couch is draped in purple cloth, trimmed with gold, as was proper for a prince of royal blood. In front of it, in the foreground, a portable step or footstool seems to be placed as a kneeler. At the left, Czar John Alexander, in imperial costume, crowned and with a nimbus, taller than all the other persons pictured (with the exception of the angel who is facing him), is looking upon his poor son. Tenderly he places his right hand on the latter's pillow and raises his left, which holds a handkerchief, toward his face. Behind him appears his living son, also crowned and with a nimbus. At the czar's side is seen an archbishop in *polystavrion* and *omophorion*, undoubtedly the Bulgarian patriarch. He is holding a liturgical book of impressive size in his right hand and oscillating a censer with his left. Behind him, a priest or a deacon is carrying a processional cross mounted on a tall standard; he is followed by unidentifiable personages. At the czar's right a first sketch must have pictured other members of the clergy holding processional crosses, for two of these crosses, painted in red, still remain, and a third appears much farther to the right (its color has changed and the red has become a pale pink).<sup>22</sup> Behind the funeral couch, John Alexander's wife Theodora bows before the mortal remains of her son, and holds a handkerchief in her left hand; beside her can be perceived the very young wife of the deceased, who was none other than Princess Irene, sister of Emperor John V Paleologus (1341–1391). She wears a black headdress and repeats Theodora's action. Both have the nimbus, but only the queen is wearing a crown. Behind the two wives appear two feminine figures wearing crowns—John Alexander's daughters. Next to Irene there must originally have been a third person standing, one of whose arms is perceptible (parallel to the mortuary bed) and who could also have been holding a cross. The latter is clearly visible and is outlined against the surrounding wall, which serves as backdrop. These historic personages are joined by an angel whose full length portrayal by itself occupies the whole righthand part of the picture. He is holding the scepter of the deceased (who had shared in his father's reign) and an ikon.

The painter has suggested the grief of the persons by their postures (the women bowed in sorrow, their handkerchiefs ready to dry their tears, the czar's hand placed on his child's pillow), but the grief is restrained, full of dignity and less clearly expressed than that seen in the Death of Queen Anne at Sopoçani,<sup>23</sup> where numerous personage cover their faces with their hands, while the king, in a white dalmatic—a sign of mourning—makes a confused gesture.

The scene is projected against a background of landscape which, although conventional, seeks to specify the place where the action occurs. Iv. Dujčev has already drawn attention to the fact that the city pictured could be none other than the Bulgarian capital, Tirnovo, with its two hills—Carevec and Trapesica. Between these two rocky mountains is pictured a deep hollow which could be identified with the valley of the Jantra separating the two parts of the city. It is interesting to make clear that not only have the city walls been pictured, but also the rocks on which the city was actually constructed. Representation of a precise place, a





Finis huius libri

Chronicle of Manasses (Vat. slavo II): The soul of Prince John Asen in Paradise.



recognizable one, as it were, in a scene illustrating the death of a historic personage was rather widespread in the 14th century. Thus, in the fresco representing the funeral service celebrated for the patriarch Joanikije, in the Church of the Holy Apostles at peć,<sup>24</sup> the three churches which constitute the Patriarchate are jointly pictured. The same is true in the picture of the Death of Archbishop Arsenije in the Church of the Virgin Hodigitria at Peć.<sup>25</sup>

Above the city, in our miniature, appear heaven and its inhabitants. In the upper part of a dark blue disk or sphere is perceptible, issuing from a segment of the vault, a form no longer recognizable. By analogy (cf. fig. 7), one can deduce that it was in all likelihood the hand of God. In the interior of the sphere, painted in monochrome, as if to be distinguished from multicolored terrestrial reality, are the wide open double doors of heaven's gate and the angels who wait there for the soul of the deceased. Of these angels only the heads are visible, whereas there stand full length at the outer edges of the doors two angels who have just opened them. Lower down, two more angels, half-length, are holding out their hands to take possession of the prince's soul, which is brought to them by an angel pictured in full flight. This last figure is colored normally and is more or less between heaven and earth, thereby linking the two parts of the picture.

The open window or open doors of heaven are common in the pictures of the Dormition of the Virgin during the Palaeologan epoch. However, they are never seen in that scene in the interior of a disk or full sphere, but in a segment of the arch of heaven—i.e., in a half-sphere. The same is true in pictures which illustrate the funeral service for a sovereign or an archbishop. Certain of these compositions show a vault of Heaven with Christ, as is seen in the Death of King Radoslav, in the Church of the Mother of God at Studenica,<sup>26</sup> and in the funeral service celebrated for the patriarch Joanikije in the Church of the Holy Apostles at Peć. These compositions also have, in common with ours, the presence of angels about the funeral bed and the angel carrying the soul of the departed one. The opened gates of Heaven inside a disk, are represented several times in miniatures and especially in Psalters, such as the Chloudov (fol.23 r), the Barberini (fol.41 r), the London Psalter (fol.25 v) or the Washington Psalter (fol.91 r). In mural painting this formula is very rare: we see it only in a rather complex representation the Trinity, in the Ubissi Church (end of the 14th century) in Georgia (fig. 7). The painting which concerns us is placed beside the Ancient of Days and Christ; it represents the Holy Spirit. There again are found the two full-length angels opening the doors and the two half-length angels who are leaning down, all painted in monochrome. In the upper part of the sphere, the hand of God is pictured in a sort of luminous segment from which shines out the ray which links the divine hand to the dove of the Holy Spirit, pictured much lower down, in the scene of the Baptism.

In a general fashion, the miniature of the Manasses manuscript of course recalls the Dormition of the Virgin, but in it there is no central figure behind the funeral bed to replace the Christ of these compositions, as is, for example, the case in Sopocani (King Uroš) and in Studenica (two angels). In fact, the lower part of the picture recalls rather closely miniatures of an earlier period depicting the death "in peace" (not violent) of various saints who were not martyrs, such as are seen in the Homilies of Saint Gregory Nazianzus (Paris, gr. 550, fol. 94 v),<sup>27</sup> or in the menologium of Basil II, fol. 330.<sup>28</sup> The Bulgarian miniature undoubtedly goes back to vanished formulas developed in Constantinople for picturing a sovereign's death. They must have been inspired sometimes by the composition of the Dormition of the Virgin, sometimes that of the death of the saints. Those original models are lost. In the Skilitzès Chronicle only the iconography current in the 11th and 12th centuries appears, and







the portrayals of the funeral service celebrated for a sovereign were not differentiated very much from the iconography used in the same period to illustrate the death of a saint.<sup>29</sup> These simplified pictures, are closer to the ideogram than to full composition with multiple personages. No allusion to Paradise is ever seen in them.

Our miniature's depiction of heaven is surrounded by an inscription at once explanatory, allusive and reassuring which begins by evoking a sacred text, the Psalms of David, as if to give more weight to what is to follow. In effect, it teaches us, in first instance, that the soul of the just man goes from earth into God's hands, an allusion to the verse of Solomon (Proverbs : 3, 1), "The soul of the just is in the hand of God..." The inscription then informs us that "the celestial powers have opened the gate of heaven and have welcomed the angel-borne soul of Czar John Assen, son of the great Czar John Alexander."<sup>30</sup>

The miniature of the Manasses manuscript displays then three rare iconographical features : (1) the open gates of heaven with angels; (2) the complete sphere in which these gates are situated and which is not found even in the Dormition of the Virgin; (3) the long narrative inscription which accompanies the picture.

This picture has a sequel on the following page (fol. 2). There, the soul of the deceased is seen entering Paradise (fig. 8). The prince advances toward the Virgin sitting enthroned between two angels. His gesture is that representing speech or, more likely, prayer, while an angel puts a hand familiarly on his shoulder. Mary makes a vague gesture of welcome. Farther on, the prince approaches Abraham who holds the soul of poor Lazarus in his bosom and takes the young man by the hand.<sup>31</sup> Behind him, the Good Thief is carrying his cross. We have here the introduction into Paradise of the soul of the deceased prince. The iconography of paradise copies the one which appears in the Last Judgment. A single difference appears in these pictures : the uniformly white background against which some trees or some plants are ordinarily outlined, is replaced here by a kind of closely planted orchard whose branches are laden with fruit, a background borrowed from the two following miniatures of the Chronicle which illustrate the beginning of Genesis. The inscription starts with Jesus's words to the Good Thief : "Today you will be with me in Paradise" (Matthew 23 : 39-43; Luke 23 : 39-43). Here this quotation takes on the value of a reference to the dead young man. The inscription continues with a more explicit account, which says that God the Father and Mary have welcomed into Paradise Czar Assen, son of the great Czar John Alexander, and that they have sent him on to his ancestor Abraham so that he (John Assen) will experience the joy of heaven to the fullest.<sup>32</sup> In this inscription exactly the same procedure as in the preceding miniature has been followed. A quotation from a sacred text serves as a "guarantee of truth" for the strictly historical inscription naming the secular personages.

The idea of this composition is relatively bold. It is, however, closely allied in spirit to what was already to be seen in the Last Judgment of an 11th century Greek Gospel, manuscript Paris. gr. 74 (fol. 93 v). The abbot of the monastery (probably the Studios) where the manuscript had been illuminated is shown in Paradise near Abraham who is sheltering the elect in his bosom (fig. 9).<sup>33</sup> Assuming the attitude of prayer, he is speaking to the Virgin on his left, while his back is turned to Abraham. Now the miniatures of this manuscript were copied by the painter of that Bulgarian Gospel called the Curzon (Brit. Mus. Add. 39627, fol. 124 r), which had also been commissioned by Czar John Alexander and executed in 1356.<sup>34</sup> In the miniature of the Last Judgment in this manuscript, John Alexander takes the place and the posture of the abbot in the gospel gr. 74 Gospel (fig. 10). In spite of these analogous approaches, it is advisable to underline three features which fundamentally distinguish the





Moscow, Museum of History, Tomic Psalter: The End of Human Life.



miniature of the Manasses manuscript from that of Paris, gr. 74 and from the Curzon Gospel: in it, the representation of paradise is separated from the image of the Last Judgment; the gestures of the Virgin, of the angel and of Abraham are manifestations of tenderness and introduce into the picture emotional values which are seen neither in the Paris. gr. 74 manuscript nor even later in the Curzon Gospel.

It remains to be seen for what reasons the two miniatures illustrating the prince's death were full page and placed at the beginning of the codex, circumstances which augment their importance and occur in no other Byzantine manuscript. It is probable that the illumination of the codex and the young man's death nearly coincided in date. Perhaps indeed it was precisely his son's death which awakened in the czar the desire of immortalizing his own reign by giving him the place of honor in the illustration of a great Chronicle; at the same time an opportunity presented itself to him of offering a last homage to the departed.

One must also take into consideration the spirit and the intellectual fashions of the period. As early as the 13th century and above all during the 14th century, the representation of subjects related to death and those expressing eschatological anxiety enjoyed certain vogue in Byzantium. In the churches are seen new subjects linked to the theme of death, like the illustration of the Canon of the Dying<sup>35</sup> or the Translation of the relics of the founder of the Serbian dynasty, Stephen Nemanja.<sup>36</sup> For its part, the Last Judgment occupies considerable surface in byzantine beginning with the 11th and 12th centuries, but does not really become widespread until the 13th.<sup>37</sup> In the same period, and especially in the 14th century, portraits appear above more than one tomb and occasionally assume a great importance.<sup>38</sup> Finally, vast compositions representing the deaths of members of the royal family, or archbishops, bishops, abbots, decorate the walls of churches.<sup>39</sup> In manuscripts of all kinds opportunities for representing death seem to be sought. Thus, a 14th century Book of Job, manuscript Paris. gr. 135 of the Bibliothèque Nationale,<sup>40</sup> displays a skeleton similar to the very well-known one of the Campo Santo in Pisa,<sup>41</sup> and on the first pages of Psalters appear curious pictures which have no relationship to the psalms and are nothing but the illustration of commentaries on death. Thus, the Mount Athos Psalter, Dionisiou 65, which dates between 1313–1348, begins with three miniatures which treat of death (fol. 11 v), the Last Judgment (fol. 11 r and 11 v) and the Life After Death of a Monk (fol. 12 r).<sup>42</sup> Other pictures of an individual's death are found in Slavic Psalters of the 14th century, notably in the Tomić Psalter (fig. 11)<sup>43</sup> and the Serbian Psalter of Munich.<sup>44</sup> None of them is an illustration for the psalms. They are accompanied by inscriptions which identify them with precision and whose vehemence contrasts with the Byzantine reserve of by-gone centuries. In them are felt an ardent questioning and a profound anguish before the mystery of death and posthumous life. These verbal effusions and the illustrations are rather readily explained. In the 14th century the Psalter becomes the pre-eminent prayer book serves private devotion. That is why there, more directly than elsewhere, are expressed the preoccupations of individuals and their taste for the theme of death, which unconsciously betrays their misgiving at becoming attuned to the new modes of thought. Finally let us point out that the miniatures mentioned are each time placed at the head of the manuscript, as in the Bulgarian Manasses. It seems that in the fourteenth century, the Christian wished to begin his reading and the prayers to follow with meditation on the ephemeral side of existence.

The last miniature of our codex is a familial portrait of Czar John Alexander (fig. 12). He is pictured exactly as on the first folio, full face, in the center of the composition, in state vestments and *kamilavkion*. But whereas the first miniature was an image of investiture, of



СВѢ НЕВЕРНИИ И ДѢЛАХУ НА КРѢ РАЗБОИ И ИСРѢ ДНѢ  
 СЪАЛНОЖЕХ ДЕШН ВЪРАИ ВЪ СЕЛѢ СОРАН ПРНЖТЪ  
 БЦАН МТНХѢА ІСОАНА АСѢНѢЦРѢ СНАВЕАИКАГО  
 ІСОАНА АЛЕЗА ПРАЦРѢ И ПРѢДА ЕСѢ АВРААМ ПРѢЩУ  
 КЕСЕАНТИСА ПОСАДѢ РАІА:



Воскресение

Chronicle of Manasses (Vat. slavo II): John Alexander and his sons.



МУ  
КРОУМЪ ДОКОВА ГЛАВЪ И ИСИ ФОРЦРЪ  
И НАПИБАТЪ ЗАРАБНЦЪ ЖЕЛА РОМА

Христо Крстиче



*Chronicle of Manasses (Vat. slavo II): Khan Kroum's Banquet.*



transmission of power from Christ to the czar, and whereas the other two compositions with portraits are dominated by the recital of a recent historical event—John Asen's death—, the last miniature of the codex is a kind of representative image of "The Sovereign," together with a fresh evocation of the prince's death.

At first glance, the structural composition is rather similar to that seen in the picture of John Alexander's family in the Curzon Gospel of the British Museum<sup>45</sup> or to that in the picture of Manuel II and his family on the leaf of the Pseudo Dionysios the Areopagite in the Louvre.<sup>46</sup> In those representations, the prince and the members of his family, all with nimbus, are lined up side by side and seen frontally, while the hand of God or the Virgin with the Child bless this row of personages from on high in heaven. In those pictures, we find each time is a portrait of the sovereign's family. But in the Manasses manuscript, the queen is not depicted and one would therefore have to see in it less a family portrait than a dynastic portrait, in which the accent is placed on the czar's stability of power in the present and future, assured by his lineage. The inscription designates John Alexander and his sons by their names; all carry the title of czar, being associated in their father's reign. A precise allusion to the young prince's death again intervenes in the person of an angel, pictured three-quarter face and walking, at the left hand edge of the composition. He seems to be leading the deceased prince, who is also slightly turned toward his father and his brothers. No analogy is known for this detail, in which resides the whole interest of the miniature.<sup>47</sup>

To these historical representations should be added another portrait of the Bulgarian sovereign, where he appears in a Biblical context. On folio 91 r (fig. 13), John Alexander is shown in the posture that he had in the first miniature. A little flying angel coming from the right crowns him with one hand and holds out a long sword to him with the other. Once more, an investiture scene, where a celestial messenger brings to the sovereign the insignia of his power. Through these two insignia the miniature again bears a resemblance to the portrait of the Bulgarian Czar in Bakovo (fig. 4), to the frontispiece of the Menologium of Basil II<sup>48</sup> and to that of the despot Stephen Lazarevic in the monastery of Reşava, in which Christ crowns the prince while an angel extends a sword to him.<sup>49</sup>

What is original in our miniature is the presence, beside the czar, of the prophet-king David. The latter is seen in three-quarter face, turned toward the czar, whom he is addressing (gesture with the right hand); in his left hand, he holds an unrolled roll with the first words of his Psalm XX (XXI) : "Lord, it is by thy power . . ." This psalm, which is a song of glory in the power of the sovereign chosen by God and serving God, here plays the role of recalling John Alexander's virtues. It is a sort of indirect panegyric, expressed by the picture; and how much the Bulgarian czar appreciated is known by texts which have been preserved.

This analysis emphasizes that out of five miniatures with portraits, three are dominated by John Asen's death, a proportion consistent with the deduction that the commissioning of the Chronicle by the Bulgarian sovereign was linked in a very specific way to the memory of the departed young man. But the artist went beyond this celebration of the prince's memory. He was able to construct a whole princely cycle—which is rare in Byzantine manuscripts—and to adapt it to the particular circumstances which were those of the Bulgarian court at the time. This cycle is very varied, rich in precise details and occasionally realistic. Its success alone would suffice to make the illustration of this copy of the Chronicle a work of outstanding importance.





*Chronicle of Manasses (Vat. slavo II): The Punishment of Justinian II's unjust relative.*



*Chronicle of Manasses (Vat. slavo II): The Flood.*



## 2. *The Cycle Related to Bulgarian History*

The illustration of events regarding Bulgarian history is not the least original feature of this code. These miniatures are placed at the end of the manuscript, but the narrative which they illustrate is interrupted by six other pictures foreign to it which relate to the history of Byzantium. In spite of that, one can speak of a cycle devoted to Bulgarian history, and it is highly unlikely that it existed in this form in the original chronicle of Constantine Manasses.

Most of these pictures correspond, indeed, to passages that are so extremely brief in the Greek text as to constitute evocations rather than narration. The Bulgarian translator completed these passages and thus took an original step. Not only does the artist devote thirteen out of sixty two miniatures (fol. 145, 145 v, 146, 147, 148 v, 163 v, 174, 175, 178, 178 v, 183, 183 v)<sup>50</sup> to them, but he also suddenly improvises. After 49 miniatures, all appearing in the text, on about a third of the page (except one on fol. 62 v),<sup>51</sup> the cycle on Bulgarian history comes out with six full-page miniatures. Five of them correspond to the principle of composition already seen on folio 62 v, that is, that two or three episodes are arranged together on the same page, giving the illusion that they form only a single picture (fig. 16).<sup>52</sup>

On the other hand, the miniature of folio 145 v, which illustrates the banquet of Khan Krum after his victory over Emperor Nicephorus (fig. 14) could only be compared, in its structural principles, to the picture of Czar John Asen's death. In it, indeed, a single scene appears on the whole page; it is situated in a unified space in which the need for perspective begins to be felt. An effort to individualize the faces also characterizes the two folios mentioned (and they are almost unique in this respect). One must recognize, however, that, in spite of its aspect of genre scene, the vivacity and the individualization of the personages, the design of this composition is borrowed almost feature for feature from the little miniature of folio 113 v (fig. 15), which illustrates the punishment of Justinian II's unjust relative. There, too, a formula is involved but adapted with talent to new content.

Finally, let us call attention to the fact that the victory over Emperor Nicephorus, one of the most glorious pages of the history of the First Bulgarian Empire, is illustrated on two whole folios (145, 145 v), therefore by the considerable array of two miniatures and three episodes. It seems evident that the painter added his miniatures to emphasize the merits of the Bulgarians, and that they did not appear in the Greek original, even if Manasses does express a clearly unfavorable opinion of Emperor Nicephorus. It must, however, be acknowledged that these full-page illustrations are not exclusively related to favorable events of the history of the Bulgarian Kingdom. Thus, Prince Svetoslav of Kiev's invasion of Bulgaria (967-972) and the battles with the Bulgarians which followed (fig. 16) are also represented on a whole page (fol. 178).<sup>53</sup> It is true that the following miniature (fol. 178 v),<sup>54</sup> of equal importance, shows John Tzimiskes attack against the Russians in 972, an attack which put an end to their invasion of Bulgaria. A little farther on is pictured fullpage (fol. 183), John Tzimiskes chasing the Russians in 972 and the city of Preslav giving a friendly welcome to the Emperor (fig. 17).<sup>55</sup> Lower down, on the same page, it is once again events ill-fated for Bulgaria which are illustrated, notably the attack on Pliska in the year 1000 by Basil II a war which ended with enormous losses for Bulgaria. Finally, on the other side of this folio (183 v),<sup>56</sup> another full-page miniature tells, in its upper part, of Basil II's victory over the Bulgarians at Belassica (29 July 1014), which was to mark the end of King Samuel's reign and had the tragic results everyone knows. On the lower part of the folio, the warriors blinded by Basil II are seen before King Samuel, who was to succumb as a result of the emotion he felt at this sight.



РѢСКИНІАѢ СЪКІНАБЪГЛАРИ



*Chronicle of Manasses (Vat. slavo. II): Prince Svetoslav invades Bulgaria*



Curiously, the narrative cycle on Bulgarian history ends with this image of defeat. Of the six full-page miniatures, then, three show events favorable to the Bulgarians and three others disastrous events, which poses a problem. There is no reason to think that the Greek chronicle included 1) as many miniatures on Bulgarian history; 2) a new illustration technique—the full-page miniature—which would have been applied just for that history. However, if all the full-page miniatures were added by the Bulgarian painter, why dwell at such length on images of defeats? Undoubtedly because it was precisely these defeats which were mentioned and illustrated, but in a more reduced format, in the Greek chronicle. In order that the cycle on Bulgarian history not end on a picture of defeat, the picture of John Alexander and his sons was placed at the end of the codex (fol. 204 v). It was thus implied that, after many victories, but also sufferings and defeats, the Bulgarian kingdom had attained John Alexander's reign of peace and prosperity. Moreover, this picture makes a pendant to that which represents eight Greek emperors of the 11th century and which figures on the preceding folio (204 v).

The other images in this cycle, pictured in the text, are much more schematic, even if they occasionally give precise details. Thus, the miniature of fol. 172 v, where one sees the banquet in Constantinople attended by Czar Simeon and, on a second register, the Bulgarian attack against the Byzantines, shows episodes too small and a little cramped, even if the banquet table groups together the Bulgarian Czar, Emperor Constantine Porphyrogenitus (913-959), the Patriarch Nicholas the Mysticus (912-925), Simeon's young sons and two women of whom one is perhaps the Empress Zoe.<sup>57</sup> The same desire for precision, which must not, however, be confused with a penchant for realism, characterizes the picture of the battle which constitutes the second episode of this miniature. The Bulgarians are attacking, with Czar Simeon (wearing a helmet) at their head, while the Byzantines are in flight and only the Emperor (crowned) is still fighting. No individualization of faces nor even the least variety in movements is observable here. It is a precise but laconic language and it is the same thing in the following miniature (fol. 174), where Czar Simeon and his army are seen burning the Church of the Zoodochos Pege, in the environs of Constantinople, in 923.<sup>58</sup> Finally, the left half of fol. 175, shows the death of the Bulgarian Czar Peter<sup>59</sup> according to a formula often used in Byzantium. Its prototype is very old and belongs to the celebrated Vienna *Genesis*, where Jacob's death is so illustrated.<sup>60</sup>

### 3. *The Other Miniatures*

Taken as a whole, some general features characterize the miniatures of the Bulgarian copy of the Manasses manuscript. Their placement on the page has already been mentioned. It ought to be added that most of these pictures are composed of two episodes relating to the same or to different events, arranged and linked in such a way that together they form a single composition. Reading them, or following them in order is often done in the opposite direction from that observed in Byzantine manuscripts having numerous miniatures; that is, the story proceeds from right to left.

Moreover, a fundamental contradiction appears between the figures and their environment. Whereas these figures are always flat, dematerialized, static, and do not benefit from any effort to model form and to give it volume, the architectural details are systematically placed so as to cut into space, their angles turned facing the spectator. Some good examples to cite would be folios 84, 85<sup>61</sup> or 131, representing respectively the Emperors Septimius Severus and Caracalla, the Emperors Diocletian and Maximian and the Assassination of the son of



Justinian II (fig. 18). In these miniatures and in many others, the architectural elements have different forms and dimensions so important that next to them the figures seem almost secondary. Most often, these elements are presented in three-quarter view, with a maximum of visible angles. However, in spite of this effort, the environment of the figures remains incomplete, and the artist never thinks of picturing the ground and the sky. Only some of the portrait miniatures and some others of the cycle illustrating Bulgarian history provide a vague support for the feet of the protagonists, which more or less corresponds to a suggestion of ground (fol. 178, 183, 183 v, 204 v, 205)<sup>62</sup>

In spite of the imperfection of the urban backgrounds, the Panscapes and the interiors, arising from the absence of ground and sky in these pictures, one must recognize that the scenic elements clearly belong to the so-called Paleologan style, whereas the figures do not show the least trace of it. Flat, without modeling, and often lined up full-face, in a surprising monotony,<sup>63</sup> the latter seem to belong to models of the 11th to 12th century, and are much closer to those of a manuscript like the Paris. gr. 74 Gospel (fig. 9) than to what was being done, beginning in the 13th century and especially in the 14th, in all genres of Byzantine paintings.

In spite of their relative unity, our miniatures bear witness to tendencies or inspirations which are rather different one from the other. Thus, a series of pictures reveals western influences. In the Flood scene (fol. 134), Noah's Ark does not correspond to any known Byzantine formula. It is not represented by a sort of floating house, but by a sailing ship with a cut-off stern (fig. 19). Some time ago A. Grabar of correctly identified a type of western ship in a very similar picture of a boat which appears in the "Life" of Saint Nicholas at Bojana.(1256)<sup>64</sup> Numerous scenes (fol. 27, 41, 83 v, 118 v, 122, 148 v)<sup>65</sup> show square, rectangular, and triangular shields, typical of the West, next to Byzantine round or oval shields.

The same influence appears in the composition a miniature belonging to the Trojan War cycle (fol. 62 v).<sup>66</sup> On this folio, the pictures are arranged in three rows, one under the other, thus covering the whole page. This seriatim arrangement of numerous episodes, each of which is rather small, on a full page, was not often done in Byzantium, whereas it is characteristic of the ornamentation system of western Bibles.<sup>67</sup>

A miniature devoted in part to the libertine existence of Emperor Commodus (fol. 83 v)<sup>68</sup> shows, for its part, a woman dressed in a long gown with a train. This garment also appears in a miniature devoted to the legend of Romulus and Remus (fol. 66 v)<sup>69</sup> and corresponds to western fashion. This could be equally true for the extravagantly wide sleeves seen on fol. 163 v. (Baptism of the Bulgarians), which are part of the costume of Empress Theodora, mother of Emperor Michael III.<sup>70</sup>

A western model could rather easily have fallen into the hands of an artist of the Byzantine world in the 14th century, and therefore, these influences do not really pose a problem. Western works of art could reach Tirnovo by means of the very numerous Venitian merchants who used to stay there in quarters reserved for them, as at Constantinople.

Although most of the Manasses miniatures are essentially formulaic, here and there rather unexpected realistic details are found. In the illustration of the building of Saint Sophia's in Constantinople by Emperor Justinian I (fol. 109 v)<sup>71</sup> appears the famous equestrian statue of the emperor; in that portraying King Ptolemy at his reading (fol. 28 v),<sup>72</sup> a figure standing next to Ptolemy is holding a lighted candle to facilitate his reading, while one great illustrated codex is open on a desk and another is being brought by a servant. Queen Cleopatra appears







just above Ptolemy and leans her head toward him (as if she were speaking to him) from the top of a wall. In spite of these realistic details (the candle, the illuminated books), the picture seems to be only an adaptation of certain well-known compositions of the Judgement of Pilate, which include his wife relating her dream to him.

The scene of the Baptism of the Russians (fol. 166 v)<sup>73</sup> is more or less inspired by the cycle of the Baptism of Christ. However, the river is not pictured according to the ordinary formula by a squarish mass of unmoving water, but by a torrent which springs from a mountain top; falling at first in a slight stream, it expands to a broad sheet on the plain where the Russians are waiting. Certain representations of horses are also remarkable for their dynamism and anatomical precision (fol. 62 v, 178 v, -our fig. 16, 183 v),<sup>74</sup> and the drawing of fallen horses is rather astonishing for certain foreshortenings. The she-wolf of the miniature showing Romulus and Remus (fol. 66 v)<sup>75</sup> is very well observed and perfectly recognizable. The representation of the destruction of the images under Constantine V Copronymus, which appears on fol. 139,<sup>76</sup> is a scene with realistic tendencies, but it is awkward. It shows two soldiers with axes who, under the Emperor's order, seem to be destroying a church rather than its decorations.

A whole category of pictures is dependent, so to speak, on an automatic formulation, without compositional arrangement. This is the case for all the pictures of several emperors seen full-face, lined up next to one another (fol. 27, 80, 89, 90 v, 204 v),<sup>77</sup> and for certain pictures of the type of the one on fol. 24, which shows Persian sovereigns<sup>78</sup> sitting enthroned. On this folio, it seems at first that one is seeing a true composition with four seated sovereigns. In reality, there has been juxtaposition of two identical motifs. On folios 82 v and 83 v, for the two episodes of which each miniature is composed, are repeated "topoi" of standing (82 v) and seated (83 v) emperors,<sup>79</sup> with hardly any variant in their gestures. These "topoi" are, moreover, repeated in a great number of other miniatures.<sup>80</sup> Such a procedure shows a certain poverty of invention, a sort of intellectual laziness which contrasts with the qualities appearing in other series, analyzed above.

To summarize these last observations, it ought to be said that a great variety of details characterizes here a group of miniatures of which the majority are composed of formulas that are rather schematic in structure. This effort toward variety, or toward the picturesque, also appears in numerous accessories such as costumes, crowns, weapons and helmets, that it would have taken too long to analyze one by one. Many of them are quite simply fantastic, such as certain crowns and headcoverings, for example. What the artist seeks is not verisimilitude, which, as everyone knows, had very little foothold in Byzantium, even in the Paleologan period. The artist rather tends to give the impression of diversity, of figurative richness, of precision in picturesque detail, which results in a pretense of reality.

A genuine creative effort has been realized, however, in the portrait miniatures and in those full-page ones illustrating Bulgarian history. An initiative of this type parallels what we know of the great strides in portraiture in the Paleologan period, the typological diversity found then, and the appearance of historical scenes in churches.

Contradictions in the level of style, diverse influences, co-existence of schematic formulas with miniatures full of invention and, seemingly, of initiative, lead one to believe there were, on the one hand, several artists,<sup>81</sup> and on the other, several models. It is not impossible that one of those models was of the 12th century—and the majority of the personages in our Manasses manuscript would have been copied after it—and the other from the 14th century



could have served for the architectural details. For if the artist had copied a 12th century model by adapting it to the style of his period, it is not clear why he would not have done as much for the personages. Obviously, this is only a hypothesis.

What seems to be more certain is the diversity of inspiration and of models to which the miniatures of the Bulgarian chronicle attest. The painters, probably from Tirnovo, were primarily interested in formulas originating in one or several Greek chronicles, but they were also alert to certain details belonging to western tradition; to all that, they added personal inventions and adaptations, several of which betray a relative ignorance of Byzantine iconographical conventions. Moreover, with other works, these miniatures bear witness to the active patronage of the Bulgarian czar, to his political ambitions and desire to assure the continuity of his lineage. Further, they reflect the emotional climate of the period, with that new freedom to express feelings of sorrow and of tenderness, and the interest aroused by commentaries on death and the posthumous destiny of the soul. Finally, in them one can observe rather well the manner in which iconographical formulas borrowed from religious images were adapted to the representation of secular subjects.

*Translated by Professor Harriet L.O. Leary  
Le Moyne College New York, U.S.A.*

## NOTES

1. Iv. Dujčev, *Miniatjurne na Manasievata letopis*, translations in German, French, English (Sofia, 1962). See the Bibliography of earlier works, p. 133 ff; the first complete edition of these miniatures is that by B. Filov, *Les miniatures de la Chronique de Constantin Manassès* Sofia, 1927.
2. *Das illuminierte Buch in der spätbyzantinischen Gesellschaft* (Heidelberg, 1970), fig. 14, p. 22.
3. *Istorijske kompozicije u srpskom slikarstvu srednjeg veka i njihove književne paralele*, in *Zbornik radova Vizantološkog instituta*, XI (1968), 113-114.
4. *The Portrait in Byzantine Illuminated Manuscripts* Leiden, 1976, pp. 150-165. The author corrects certain errors of secondary importance made by these predecessors (cf. p. 161, note 34) and offers an iconographical study which is brief, but on the whole very accurate.
5. Cf. Dujčev, *op. cit.*, notice 1.
6. This type of composition is rarer in manuscripts than in frescoes. Nevertheless it is found in the Mount Athos manuscript Ivron 5, fo. 456 v and 457 (cf. Belting, *Das Buch*, . . . , fig. 23, 24), for example.
7. Cf. A. Grabar, *L'Empereur dans l'art byzantin* (Paris, 1936), pp. 112-122.
8. Cf. S. Cirac-Estopanan, *Skylitzes Matritensis* (Barcelone-Madrid, 1965), n 14, 57, for example.
9. Cf. *De cerim.*, I, 7, p. 54; 8, pp. 57-59, 60.
10. Cf. note 5.
11. Cf. Spatharakis, *op. cit.*, fig. 98.
12. Cf. Belting, *op. cit.*, fig. 98.
13. Cf. Spatharakis, *op. cit.*, fig. 174.
14. Cf. *Ibid.*, fig. 111 a.
15. Cf. T. Velmans, *La peinture murale byzantine à la fin du moyen âge* (Paris, 1978), fig. 60.
16. Cf. Belting, *op. cit.*, fig. 39 pp. 65-66.
17. H. Belting had thought the opposite: that is, that the artist was inspired by a two-person composition with Christ and the donor, and that, consequently, Manasses' figure was added. His figure, then, would have copied the attitude of the Christ figure (*op. cit.*, p. 22). To support this conclusion H. Belting observes, accurately, that normally Manasses ought not to have a nimbus nor the costume of a biblical prophet, as is the case. It is impossible, however, to imagine that from the outset Christ would have been represented as writing, a peculiarity seen in no other Byzantine or para-Byzantine work. I. Spatharakis (cf. *op. cit.*, p. 162) has already expressed an opinion analogous to our own. It is Manasses, author of the Chronicle, who is shown in the process of carrying out his work, according to a widespread custom, and he serves as model for the Christ figure, which explains the absurdity of the latter.



18. Cf. Velmans, *La peinture . . .*, pp. 64.65.
19. In fact, it was during the reign of Emperor Manuel I Comnenus (1141-1180) that the original Chronicle had been written; but its donor was the sister-in-law of the sovereign, *Sebastocratorissa* Irene, and nothing indicates that it was the emperor who was portrayed on the first pages of the manuscript. Irene was the wife of *Sebastocrator* Andronicus, second son of John II Comenus and Emperor Manuel I's brother. The eventuality of a portrait of Manuel I at the head of the manuscript is all the more doubtful, given that Irene was an ambitious woman, who had hoped to become empress when her husband died prematurely in 1143. It was precisely Manuel I who took his brother's place and occupied the throne. Enthusiastic about literature and a protectress of men of letters (Manasses, J. Tzézès), Irene herself probably figured as donor in the original Chronicle, as indeed, is seen in the Greek copy preserved at Vienna, the Vind. Phill. gr. 149, fol. 10 r, our fig. 3.
20. D. Talbot Rice, *Art byzantin* (Paris-Bruxelles, 1959), pl. XI.
21. There Christ is seen enthroned in a segment of the heavens, holding a crown, while low down, three angels are crowning the three members of the imperial family. (Spatharakis, *op. cit.*, fig. 7 and p. 26).
22. These crosses have not been mentioned up to now in the studies and descriptions of our miniatures. They are not, however, in any way unusual. The processional cross was regularly carried in religious processions and Basil II's *Menologium* shows it in several processions (cf. *II Menologio di Basillio II* (Turin, 1907), fig. 142-350, for example). What is perhaps a bit astonishing is the relatively large number of these crosses held by personages present at Prince John Asen's funeral service; it seems they replace, in part, the lighted candles ordinarily put in the hands of members of such a gathering.
23. Cf. Djurić, *op. cit.*, fig. 25, 26.
24. Cf. V. Petković, *La peinture serbe du moyen âge* (Belgrade, 1930), fig. 71.
25. Cf. Djurić, *op. cit.*, sketch 8.
26. Cf. *ibid.*, sketch 9.
27. Cf. H. Omont, *Miniatures des plus anciens manuscrits de la Bibliothèque Nationale* (Paris, 1929), pl. CXI; see also pl. CXIII.
28. Cf. *II Menologio . . .*, fig. 40, 154, 327, for example.
29. See, for example, in Estopanan, *op. cit.*, fig. 42 a, 98, etc.
30. See the original inscription, as well as the other less important ones appearing in this miniature in Dujčev, *op. cit.*, p. 2.
31. We see, as usual, a tiny naked figure that can barely be distinguished on the photograph. Prof. Dujčev suggested seeing in it the prince's soul (cf. *op. cit.*, p. 3). For my part, I believe Lazarus is represented, as in all depictions of Abraham in Paradise. This episode is common to Byzantine compositions on the Last Judgment and does not vary much : sometimes Lazarus, sometimes "the elect" are pictured in Abraham's bosom.
32. The original inscription is in Dujčev, *op. cit.*, p. 3.
33. Cf. Omont, *Évangiles avec peintures byzantines du XIe siècle* (Paris, ), II, pl. 81.
34. Cf. S. Der Nersessian, "Two Slavonic Parallels of the Greek Tetra-evangelia," *The Art Bulletin*, 9 (1927), 233-274. *Id.*, "Une nouvelle réplique slavone du Paris gr. 74 et les manuscrits d'Anastase Crimovici," *Mélanges N. Iorga* (Paris, 1933), 695-725. These observations have been completed by I. Spatharakis, *op. cit.*, p. 67 ff., and by V. Lihacova, in a paper read at the Meeting of the International Association of South-east European Studies in Moscow, 1978.
35. In the chapel Saint George of Hilandar Tower (13th century) and in the exonarthex of Saint Sophia's at Ohrid (14th century); see S. Radojčić, "Čin bivajemi na razlucenije dusi od tela u monumentalnim slikarstvu XIV veka," *Zbornik rodova Vizantoloskog Instituta*, 7 (1961), 39-52.
36. Cf. Djurić, *Istorijske komposicije . . .*, VIII, 72, ff.; G. Babić, *Les chapelles annexes des églises byzantines* (Paris, 1969), fig.
37. Sometimes, the Last Judgment composition is transformed into a cycle occupying a whole chapel, as is the case at Milesevo, for example (cf. S. Radojčić, *Mileseva* (Belgrade, 1963), pl. XLII-XLVI).
38. The example of Kahrié Djami (South Chapel) with its tombs surmounted by portraits could suffice, but others could be cited in Greece and in Yugoslavia (cf. Underwood, *op. cit.*, I, 269-309, III, 533-553; Djurić, *Istorijske komposicije . . .*, XI, 99-122; Velmans, *La peinture murale . . .*, pp. 89 ff.).
39. Cf. *ibid.*, p. 91 ff.; Djurić, "Fresques médiévales à Chilandar. Contributions au catalogue des fresques du Mont Athos," *Etudes in Actes du XIIe Congrès International des Etudes Byzantines* (Belgrade, 1964), 91-98, fig. 56-60.
40. Cf. T. Velmans, "Le Parisinus Grecus 135 et quelques autres peintures de style gothique dans les manuscrits grecs à l'époque des Paléologues," *Cahiers Archéologiques*, XVII, 222 ff., fig. 16.



41. Cf. *ibid.*, fig. 19.
42. Cf. R. Stichel, *Studien zum Verhältnis von Text und Bild spät—und nachbyzantinischer Vergänglichkeitsdarstellungen* (Vienne-Cologne-Graz, 1971), pl. 3, fig. 7–9, p. 76 ff.
43. On this Bulgarian miniature of the 14th century see M. V. Scepkina, *Bolgarskaja miniatjura XIV veka*, issledovanie psaltira Tomiça (Moscow, 1963), p. 61. The numerous inscriptions which accompany the picture leave no doubt about the subject represented. It is certainly the angel of death offering the chalice of death to an anonymous personage. Here also the iconographical pattern for the Dormition of the Virgin is used.
44. Cf. Stichel, *op. cit.*, pp. 17–75, pl. I, fig. 1, 2 (with the bibliography).
45. Cf. Velmans, *La peinture . . .*, fig. 14.
46. Cf. *Ibid.*, fig. 12.
47. Unlike the portraits representing the sovereign with his family previously cited, which, like almost all portraits of this type, stand out against a uniform and empty background, John Alexander's family is placed, once more, in a kind of landscape. The ground is a crude green suggesting the grass of a meadow, and the wall with its two fortified towers is undoubtedly the one surrounding a city. All in all, it is a matter of a simplified, schematic landscape which is nevertheless relatively logical. Without exaggerating the realistic intentions of the artist, always so limited in the region of Byzantine influence, one can think that, here, the personages are grouped before the ramparts of Tirnovo.
48. *Il Menologio . . .*, pl. I.
49. Cf. Velmans, *La peinture . . .*, fig. 33.
50. Cf. Dujčev, *op. cit.*, fig. 50–55, 57, 60–66.
51. The battle of Troy is involved; cf. Dujčev *op. cit.*, fig. 20
52. This principle of composition was adopted on folios 145, 172 v, 178, 178 v, 183, 183 v (cf. *ibid.*, fig. 50, 60, 63, 64, 65, 66).
53. Cf. *ibid.*, notice 63.
54. Cf., *ibid.*, fig. 64.
55. Cf., *ibid.*, fig. 65.
56. Cf., *ibid.*, fig. 66.
57. Cf., *ibid.*, fig. 60 and corresponding notice.
58. Cf., *ibid.*, fig. 61.
59. Cf., *ibid.*, fig. 62.
60. Cf. W. R. Hartel and F. Wickhoff, *Die Wiener Genesis* (Vienna, 1895), p. 11.
61. Cf. Dujčev, *op. cit.*, fig. 28, 29.
62. Sometimes a simple line is involved, sometimes a green band of irregular contours, but never, to all intents and purposes, a well-defined ground forming a surface (cf. *ibid.*, fig. 63, 65, 66, 68, 69).
63. Cf. *ibid.*, fig. 6, 7, 12, 25, 31, 68.
64. Cf. A. Grabar, *La peinture religieuse en Bulgarie* (Paris, 1928), p.
65. Cf. Dujčev, *op. cit.*, fig. 12, 17, 27, 41, 42, 54.
66. Cf. *ibid.*, fig. 20.
67. This western feature is even less surprising since it is known that the Bulgarian translator added to his text a second account, on the Trojan War, that is believed to have been borrowed from an western source and to have been transmitted through a Croatian manuscript (cf. Dujčev, *op. cit.*, p. 32).
68. Cf. Dujčev, *op. cit.*, fig. 27.
69. Cf., *ibid.*, fig. 21.
70. Cf., *ibid.*, fig. 57.
71. Cf., *ibid.*, fig. 38.
72. Cf., *ibid.*, fig. 14.
73. Cf., *ibid.*, fig. 58.
74. Cf., *ibid.*, fig. 20, 65.
75. Cf., *ibid.*, fig. 21.
76. Cf., *ibid.*, fig. 48.
77. Cf., *ibid.*, fig. 12, 15, 31, 32.
78. Cf., *ibid.*, fig. 11.
79. Cf., *ibid.*, fig. 26, 27.
80. See, for example, the following folios: 84, 85 and 86 v, with the emperor seated (cf. *ibid.*, fig. 28, 29, 30).
81. Iv. Dujčev has already emphasized this probability (cf. *ibid.*, p. 132).



## BOOK REVIEW

*Henri Stern. L'art byzantin. Paris. Presses universitaires de France. 1982. 188 pages.*

Here is a complete account of Byzantine art from the reign of Justinian to the fall of Constantinople (The author divides the byzantin period in three epochs: L'art protobyzantin, L'apogée de l'art byzantin 843–1204 and l'art des Paléologues). The plates illustrate architectural works, frescoes, mosaics, ivories, be jewelled gospel covers and many other opulent works of art, which for the people of Byzantium were the material proof of their greatness and power over the Mediterranean states.

Professor Henri Stern is unquestionably one of the greatest authorities on Byzantin art. His travels led him as far a field as the rock churches of Cappadocia and Cicilia, the tufa monuments of Armenia and Georgia and Jugoslavia and the thirteenth-century ceramic factories of Bulgaria, now buried in the alluvial mud of the Danube. This work provides a masterly survey, excitingly illustrated, of an art of magnificence and power that belonged to a great and sophisticated society.

**Nicholas Catanoy**